

REMARKS

By the present amendment, Applicant has amended Claims 1, 3 and 6. Claims 2, 16 and 17 have been canceled. Claims 1 and 3-15 remain pending in the present application. Claims 1 and 6 are independent claims.

In the recent Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1 and 9-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cobb (U.S. Patent No. 5,641,173), Chen (U.S. Patent No. 5,301,963) and Horste (U.S. Patent No. 2,688,571) in view of Hodgkin (U.S. Patent No. 2,210,292). Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cobb, Chen, Horste and Hodgkin in view of Bender (U.S. Patent No. 1,662,292). The Examiner indicated that Claims 2, 3 and 6-8 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and of any intervening claims.

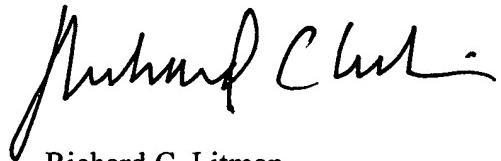
The cancellation of independent Claims 16 and 17 by the present amendment renders the prior art rejection of record moot with respect to these claims. The Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter is noted with appreciation. In this regard, Applicant has amended independent Claim 1 to include the allowable subject matter of Claims 2. The dependency of Claim 3 has been changed to now depend from amended Claim -- 1 --. Also, allowable Claim 6 has been rewritten in independent form. For at least these reasons, Applicant's respectfully submit that independent Claims 1 and 6, as amended, and corresponding dependent Claims 3-5 and 9-15 are allowable over the prior art of record.

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For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. If such is not the case, the Examiner is requested to kindly contact the undersigned in an effort to satisfactorily conclude the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



Richard C. Litman
Registration No. 30,868
(703) 486-1000

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